



First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

Curecanti National Recreation Area

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: BLCA

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

The employees at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area are the environmental leaders of today and tomorrow, will teach stewardship and land ethics to this and future generations, and will model professional excellence to our visitors, our communities and partners. We will set a "green standard" that reduces environmental impacts of park operations and inspires an environmental conscience in Americans. We will teach and learn in America's greatest outdoor classrooms, inspiring a new generation of stewards, responsible citizens, who demonstrate personal ownership of their national parks. We will invest in ourselves to demonstrate management excellence, to create and maintain a safe work environment with a diverse workforce, and will develop cutting edge technological solutions for communication and operational challenges. We are committed to creating and maintaining a relevant national park system that engages the public in the work of caring for America's treasures.

Significant effort on the part of park staff will include implementing the cutting edge Resource Protection Plan. The natural, cultural, recreational, scientific, and scenic values are responsible for the unique character of Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area. These values include critical hydrological processes, historic Cimarron railroad resources, and critical habitat for the Gunnison Sage Grouse and Gunnison prairie dog populations, and will be improved and preserved in partnership with other agencies, local governments and private landowners. Through legislation, the National Park Service will be formally authorized as the managing agency for Curecanti. Legislation will also authorize the NPS to provide direct technical assistance to private landowners for protection of the resources and values of the NRA, as well as providing an array of tools to accomplish resource protection beyond park boundaries. A cadre of citizen stewards will demonstrate that protecting land does not mean all land must be held by governmental entities, but the actions of citizens and landowners who are committed to an environmental ethic will provide long-term benefits to future generations.

Educational outreach will serve a new generation through technology, hands-on field camps for advanced Junior Rangers, and the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program. Children will be reconnected to the outdoors through education and recreation, challenging them with creative mental and physical activities.

Adults will be challenged with an array of recreational opportunities to improve health and well being. In cooperation with partners and local communities, bike and hike trails will be lengthened, connecting towns with the great outdoors. Exceptional learning opportunities will be available that connect people to parks, increasing visitor satisfaction and visitor understanding of the purpose of parks. Life-long learning venues and enduring recreational opportunities will urge Americans to rediscover and re-embrace their national parks.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Constance A. Rudd - Superintendent

Site: BLCA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Increase resource preservation efforts and presence in backcountry and wilderness areas of the park. Engage the public in developing a Backcountry and Wildernss Plan.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: BLCA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

☒ **Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

Control exotic vegetation and restore native riparian vegetation to Cooper Ranch / Neversink; study North Rim elk population and devise appropriate management program in cooperation with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and USGS; and initiate Gunnison prairie dog preservation and management program.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.**

Rehabilitate East Portal Campground sites, install electricity at Lake Fork Campground, and rehabilitate Elk Creek Visitor Center.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.**

The parks' water quality is maintained and improved where necessary based on the results of water quality monitoring efforts. Antidegradation (ONRW) designation is considered and pursued through the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission in cooperation with Gunnison Basin water quality stakeholders if determined to be feasible.

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☒ **Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.**

A Determination of Eligibility for narrow gauge railroad equipment at Cimarron will be completed. If determined eligible, a National Register Nomination will be completed for said resources. The park will continue efforts to restore and preserve the narrow gauge railroad equipment in cooperation with partners and stakeholders.

Archeological resource condition assessments will be completed on a manageable schedule.

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Site: BLCA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Park staff will support a water right quantification for BLCA including monitoring of the environmental response to flow regulation on riparian and aquatic habitats within the inner canyon.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: BLCA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

In cooperation with USGS and the Colorado Division of Wildlife, BLCA/CURE staff will continue efforts to collect habitat use data using radio-collared Gunnison Grouse in order to develop a habitat occupancy probability spatial coverage as well as a resource selection model. These products will identify grouse habitat preferences/needs and areas where habitat improvements are necessary to provide suitable habitat, improve habitat quality, and link habitat islands across public and private lands to enhance Gunnison Grouse population sustainability.

The park will keep sound science in the forefront of all discussions involving quantification of a Federal Reserve water right for BLCA.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: BLCA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Encourage children to be future conservationists.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Establish a Junior Ranger summer program for visiting and local youth. Provide a conservation-based math/science curriculum for 10-15,000 K-12 students.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: BLCA

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

☒ Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

Establish a park-wide recycling program. Assure all new construction and rehab work incorporates best available sustainable materials and design. Reduce energy costs.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Develop a nightsky-friendly lighting plan and install high-efficiency fixtures for facilities at BLCA/CURE.

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Site: BLCA

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

☒ Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.

Ensure management of facilities and equipment to operate safely, reliably, and is available and functioning in a cost efficient (total life-cycle management) and environmentally responsible manner utilizing solar, wind generation and bio-based fuels and electricity with the latest state of the art technology.

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☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Purchase and use hybrid or alternative fuel (E85) vehicles in the Outreach Education program. Purchase and use an efficient 4-stroke, lower horsepower and lighter watercraft for increased on-water roving contacts.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: BLCA

RECREATION

☒ Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level-federal, regional, state, local-to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

☒ Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

Produce a comprehensive and collaborative recreational trails plan for hiking, horse use, and biking.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Monitor Red Rock Canyon access program. Through Rule Making, address Off Road Vehicle Use below the high water line. Establish a user-friendly lottery-based reservation system for Red Rock Canyon.

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Site: BLCA

RECREATION

☒ Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

☒ Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

Increase volunteer hours by 5%.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: BLCA

RECREATION

☒ Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Develop experiential high school curriculum units for the Gunnison Valley (Alternative) School.

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Site: BLCA

RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

Increase open hours at all park visitor centers. Develop an Interpretive Plan for East Portal, which includes exhibits. Expand the effectiveness of staffing through the use of a volunteer corps of local interest groups (Astronomical societies, botanical clubs), and through high school clubs.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Establish a local community Hispanic outreach program which involves special activities and Spanish-language interpretation.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: BLCA

EDUCATION

☒ Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Maintain and promote a pre-K-12 curriculum-based education program, which uses established National and State content-outcome standards for science and math. Develop pre- and post-site activities which enhance learning about the National Park Service and Black Canyon and Curecanti, and evaluate understanding of curriculum units. Provide all curriculum units and activities on the nps.gov website in English and Spanish.

We will continue a Teacher-Ranger-Teacher internship program for 2 Colorado teachers who will be engaged in summer interpretive programming and return to their classrooms in the fall with place-based activities/curriculum.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: BLCA

EDUCATION

☒ **Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.**

☒ **Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.**

Provide a park-based web and Podcast tour of the Black Canyon by producing 48 narrated videos. The iPod and cellular phone media will contain ranger-narrated 2-minute stories on four themes: recreation, history, life and geology. Four stories will be produced for each of the 12 overlooks on the south rim drive. Podcasts will be promoted, downloaded from, and evaluated on the popular iTunes website.

We will provide active streaming webcams from 3-5 locations in the two parks, served on both of the park websites.

We will produce an interactive inquiry-based web ranger program, delivered on the park websites.

We will continue to convert K-12 curriculum materials served on our website to other languages beyond English and Spanish.

We will establish touchscreen technology for further exploration exhibits at the South Rim visitor center, providing video of lesser known areas.

We will produce a new edit of the Black Canyon's orientation video using state-of-the-art sound and captioning. This video will be shown automatically on the half-hour at the south rim visitor center.

We will establish a web ranger program that includes inquiry-based learning.

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☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

We will provide active streaming webcams from 3-5 locations in the two parks, served on both of the park websites.

We will provide and encourage the establishment of "Earthcache" geocaches in both parks to promote the educational stewardship of significant geological sites.

We will provide Internet-fed programming from NASA and the Space Telescope and Science Institute in both major visitor centers, which demonstrate the significance of dark sky preservation in National Parks.

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Site: BLCA

EDUCATION

☒ **Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.**

☒ **Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.**

Both parks will produce and actively distribute energetic and free Jr Ranger activity booklets which include a badge and ceremony at completion of the tasks. Curecanti NRA will continue with the Ranger Buddy program -- a coloring booklet and sticker for younger children/siblings. Black Canyon will establish another Jr Ranger activity booklet in Spanish, using the Jr Ranger Ambassador program provided by the National Park Foundation.

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☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

We will establish a summer-camp Advanced Jr Ranger program, engaging local youth at both parks.

Provide educational opportunities with travelling Elderhostel programs, and local Retired Senior Volunteer Programs

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Site: BLCA

EDUCATION

☒ Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

☒ Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Establish an information office/fee collection centralized location and operation at Elk Creek. The center will serve as the answer center for in-person, telephone, email, mail and fax inquiries.

Replace 8 CURE wayside exhibits.

Replace all CURE roadside informational/directional signs with NPS Identity standards.

Establish a partnership with NASA, Gunnison Valley Observatory, Black Canyon Astronomical Society and Gunnison Valley Astronomical Society to provide regular star observations and promote dark sky preservation in the two parks.

Increase open hours in all visitor centers in both parks.

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Site: BLCA

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

☒ Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

Develop and use innovative recruiting and retention strategies to attract a diverse workforce.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: BLCA

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

☒ Establish a structured professional development curriculum to provide park managers with the skills to apply best business practices and superior leadership.

Actively mentor high potential employees and invest in supervisory and management level training for them.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: BLCA

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

☒ Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

Re-establish a fully functional employee safety management system. Develop a Safety Plan that includes "lessons learned" from each accident or significant near-miss.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Establish Executive Safety Committee and Collateral Duty Safety Officer. Support region-wide circuit-rider Safety Professional.

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Site: BLCA

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Make national parks the first choice in philanthropic giving among those concerned about environmental, cultural, and recreational values.

☒ Improve communications and marketing capacity to increase public understanding of our mission, opportunities, and benefits.

We will produce a marketing strategy which includes local cable television video, Podcast video enabled through popular international sources such as iTunes and YouTube, and develop on-time interpretive media delivered through cellular/wireless providers.

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